

*The holy Conversation, and high Expectation,
of true Christians.*

A

D I S C O U R S E,

DELIVERED IN LONDON,

April 29, M DCC LXXXIX.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A F E W R E M A R K S

On the Rev. Mr. DAN TAYLOR'S

DISCOURSE, ENTITLED,

*"The Eternity of future Punishment
asserted and improved."*

IN A

LETTER TO A FRIEND.

By ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

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the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the image of God.

Heavenly spirits have seen his Glory, and know him.

PHILIPPIANS III. 20, 21.

FOR OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN; FROM
WHENCE ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR,
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: WHO SHALL
CHANGE OUR VILE BODY, THAT IT MAY BE
FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY,
ACCORDING TO THE WORKING WHEREBY HE
IS ABLE EVEN TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS UNTO
HIMSELF.

HOW great is the goodness and love of our Creator, that he should give his Son out of his bosom, to take our likeness, that so God being manifest in the flesh, we might come to be familiarly acquainted with him, conformed to his character now, and be hereafter entirely transformed into his image and likeness!

"*For our Conversation is in Heaven:*"----
What doth St. Paul intend by HEAVEN?
and What by having our conversation there?

By

By *Heaven*, he intends that glorious holy City, the *New Jerusalem*, in which is the throne of God and the Lamb ; that glorious City,

Whose Walls are Jasper, and whose Floor is Gold :
 Whose Gates so wide and high are several Pearls ;
 Whose grand Foundations are of precious Stones ;
 God and the Lamb its Glory, Temple, Light,
 The City shines with pure celestial rays,
 As jasper precious, and as crystal clear ;

says the poet,

" Ancient of Days, to whom all times are Now ;

" Before whose glory lofty Seraphs bow

" Their blushing cheeks, and veil their blemish'd faces,

" That uncontain'd at once dost fill all places !

" How glorious ! Oh how far beyond the height

" Of puzzled quills, or the obtuse conceit

" Of flesh and blood, or the too flat reports

" Of mortal tongues, are thy expressless courts !

" Whole glory to paint forth with greater art,

" Ravish my fancy, and inspire my heart.

" Excuse my bold attempt, and pardon me

" For shewing Sense what Faith alone should see.

" Ten thousand millions, and ten thousand more,

" Of angel measur'd leagues from th' eastern shore

" Of dungeon Earth, thy glorious palace stands ;

" Before whose pearly gates ten thousand bands

" Of armed Angels, wait to entertain

" Those purged souls for whom the Lamb was slain.

" Her streets with burnish'd gold are pay'd around ;

" Stars lie like pebbles scatter'd on the ground ;

" Pearls

“ Pearls, mixt with Onyx and the jasper stone,
 “ Make gravell’d causeways to be trampled on;
 “ There shines no sun by day, nor moon by night;
 “ The palace glory is the palace light : ” &c.

This is indeed a city worthy of the name; the grandest of all God’s buildings. We might indeed rationally conclude, if the Scripture had not declared it, that the great King, whose remote dominions are planted, or, as the poet expresses it, “ sow’d thick with stars,” which are doubtless suns, no less spacious and luminous than the radiant source of our day, must have a palace formed in the grandest and most glorious style, worthy of his dignity and greatness. But God hath not left us in this to bare conjecture, but hath in all ages intimated or revealed to his faithful servants, that he hath prepared for them a city, grand, beautiful, and glorious beyond conception! Let us cast our eyes a moment over the sacred pages, and see how this truth shines with the greatest lustre:

Abraham the patriarch was not wholly ignorant of this glorious place, “ For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Heb. xi. 10. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob

“ all

" all died in faith; not having received the
 " promises, but having seen them afar off,
 " and were persuaded of them and embraced
 " them; and confessed that they were stran-
 " gers and pilgrims on the earth. For they
 " that say such things declare plainly that
 " they seek a country. And truly if they
 " had been mindful of that country from
 " whence they came out, they might have
 " had opportunity to have returned. But
 " now they desire a better country, that is
 " an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed
 " ed to be called their God, for he hath
 " prepared for them a city." ver. 13, 14, 15.
 16.

This is the city that stands upon mount Sion above, called by way of eminence, *The City of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem*; where the innumerable company of angels dwell; where the general assembly and Church of the First-born who are written in heaven, constantly inhabit, and rejoice in the presence of God, where there is fullness of joy, and at his right hand, where endless pleasures abound; There the spirits of just men made perfect are gathered together. There Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant appears in his glorified body.

It is well that we are informed that the builder and maker of this city is God ; for otherwise it would be impossible to believe the description true : but as it owes its existence to infinite Wisdom and Power, and is the production of that Being to whom nothing that he pleases to do is impossible, we need not fear but the city is full equal to that description given of it in the sacred volume of the Book : though it must be confessed, that no fiction ever presented any thing to the imagination so glorious or so grand.

A city, twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles square, and of the same prodigious height, built of jasper, and garnished with all manner of precious stones, having twelve gates, each of one pearl, and streets of pure gold, as it were transparent glass ; could not be built by creatures, even though the materials were provided to their hands ; neither could a thousand such globes as ours furnish such an infinite quantity of precious materials as would be sufficient to compose such a city. Well may this be called, *The City of the living God* ; for He only could form such an one ; and the very grandeur and magnificence of it, shews it to be

be worthy of such a builder, and a fit habitation for JAHOVAH and his holy saints.

But some say, Why must we conceive of Heaven, as of some certain place? i. e. on earth or elsewhere? To which I answer, that many reasons join to oblige us to think so. The Scriptures unite to give us that idea: This of itself ought to convince us: unless we think thus, we think without having any proper ideas at all. Besides, the glorified body of our Lord, is in existence somewhere: The Apostles looked for Christ to come from Heaven; and therefore there must be such a place. There is a city called Jerusalem, which is above, which is free, which is the mother of all true believers, Gal. iv. 26. This is the royal imperial City; the residence of the King of kings. This City shall descend to the new Earth; and shall be then, as now, the habitation of holy beings; into which no unclean thing shall in any wise enter. Blessed are they that do the commandments of God, that they may enter in through the gates into the city; for the righteous nation that keepeth Truth shall enter therein; and none else. Rev. xxiii. 14. Isai. xxvi. 2.

The

The Apostles had their minds and conversation so much in Heaven, or in this holy city, that they could say, “For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” Heb. xiii. 14. The glories, riches, honours, and pleasures of this City can never be fully set forth; it is surely worth seeking, and if we are so happy as to enter there, it will richly repay all our pains,

Let us therefore examine, whether our conversation be in Heaven or not; and consequently, whether we have reason to hope that we shall enter there when we depart hence.

Our Saviour hath taught us to lay up our treasure in Heaven, assuring us, that “where the treasure is, there the heart will be also.” Matt. vi. 19, 20, 21. Luke xii. 33, 34. and hath elsewhere told us, that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Matt. xii. 34. The men of the world whose hearts are set upon earthly things, speak of the world: their conversation is in the world: Their language is, *Who will shew us any good?* How shall we gain the riches of the earth, obtain its honours, or enjoy its pleasures?

fures? Or, if they have obtained great treasures in the world, then their language is, " Soul, thou hast much goods, laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." St. Luke, xii. 19. If our conversation is in Heaven, we shall think much of the blessed Redeemer who dwells there, shall speak much of him, and of the great things he hath done for us; we shall delight to serve and glorify him; earnestly desire to be like him in temper, disposition, and behaviour; and shall be desirous of being fitted for, and brought to the beatific vision in heaven above. If our greatest delight is in Heaven, there can be no doubt but that our conversation will be there; our affections and desires will tend towards the celestial city and the heavenly country. And therefore St. Paul exhorts the Colossians, saying, " If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ setteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Col. iii. 1, 2.

There are three very important reasons that may be given why we should not seek with anxiety the things of time and sense,

nor

nor set our affection on things below, and why we should set our affection on things above, and seek them with the greatest earnestness imaginable.

1. The things of earth are transient; but the things of heaven are permanent. The fashion of this world passeth away; and therefore says the wise man, “ Labour not “ to be rich : Cease from thine own wisdom. “ Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which “ is not ? for riches certainly make them-“ selves wings ; they fly away as an eagle “ towards heaven.” Prov. xxiii. 4, 5. Gold, silver, goodly apparel, and even houses and lands are found to be but transient enjoyments. A man may be possessed of them in great abundance, and yet in a very little while be dispossessed of all : There is no security in riches, that can insure their owners of a long continuance ; much less then are worldly honours or pleasures of a durable nature. Honour is a mere puff of noisy breath, a bubble upon the water, that breaks with the least touch, and disappoints the hopes and expectations of those who trust therein. And as for pleasure, the enjoyment of it depends upon so many precarious cir-

B cumstances,

circumstances, as health, affluence, friends, &c. of which we cannot be sure at all for any length of time, that nothing is more fleeting. So thought the poet, when he said,

“ The spider's most attenuated thread,
“ Is cord, is cable to man's tender tie
“ To earthly bliss, it breaks at every breeze.”

But all the riches, honours, and pleasures of heaven are durable and unfading. Therefore it is well worth while to have our conversation in heaven, even while we dwell upon the earth.

2. Another reason why we should not seek seek to lay up treasures on earth, and why we should not set our affection on things below, is, that we shall continue here but a very little while: our lives are but as a vapour, a hand's breadth, and compared to the most fleeting things on earth. We are here but for a moment, and then we fly away, and are no more seen: but when we come to obtain those glorious possessions which our Lord hath prepared for us, we shall have an absolute certainty that we shall never be deprived of them.

3. The

3. The things of this world are not able to satisfy the desires of the soul ; they are empty of solid happiness. Solomon, who tried earthly riches, honours and pleasures more than any man ever did, wrote *Vanity of vanities* on them all ; and thus from his sad experience warned us not to expect compleat satisfaction in all the goods that earth can boast. But the treasures of heaven are capable of satisfying our most unbounded wishes.

These are good reasons why we should have our conversation in heaven, and not upon earth.

But there is another reason intimated why the Apostles had their conversation in heaven, viz. because from thence they looked for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ; they expected Jesus would come again, and for this grand event they waited, and taught the Christians, who had turned from idols to serve the living God, *to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.* 1 Thessl. i. 10. Our Lord Jesus ascended up to heaven, and opened the gates of the New Jerusalem to all believers ; he was received up, and the Heavens must retain him,

untill the ages of Restitution begin ; then he will descend to earth again, for the most important purposes. But as I have treated this subject pretty fully in my Lectures on the Prophecies, and have there given the evidence from Scripture of that grand event, and also the designs of the same, I need therefore say the less here.

The Lord Jesus Christ will certainly appear as a Saviour ; he will save the tribes of Jacob from their enemies who shall at that time surround them, and be ready to destroy them ; but Christ shall appear for their deliverance. And not only so, but Jesus at that day shall save them from their sins, those most deadly enemies. When he shall appear, (as he certainly will) they shall behold him with the ensign of the cross carried before him, and the marks of the nails in his hands and feet, and of the spear in his side. Then a spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured out upon them, and they shall look upon him that was pierced, and they shall be in the greatest bitterness and sorrow imaginable upon that occasion : their sorrow is compared to the mourning of the fond father for the death of his only son, or to the grief of the tender

tender mother when she parts with her first-born child : or like the mourning in the valley of Megiddo, when good Josiah fell by an untimely death. The amazing sorrow which the Jews shall feel at the sight of the glorious Messiah, cannot be described, but it shall end well ; as the pain and anguish of a woman in travail who is safely delivered of a son ; to which their distress is compared.

But we leave them, and speak of the great things Christ shall do for his saints at his coming. He shall change our vile bodies ; and whether we fall asleep or not before his coming, it will make no difference in this respect. Those saints that are dead shall be then raised from the dust ; and those that are alive shall be changed. From this very change of the bodies of the saints that shall be found alive, I argue the reality and the necessity of the resurrection ; or else those that are found alive, whose bodies shall not die but be changed, will have a great advantage over such as have died in the Lord ; which is inconsistent.

Let us not dispute the power of our Lord ; for he that can change a vile and corruptible body that hath never died, and in a moment
cause

cause it to pass into a state of incorruptibility and immortality, can just as easily raise the dead saints from their graves into the same state : " For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them who are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever (or always) be with the Lord."

1 Thess. iv. 14, 15, 16, 17.

Here we see that the saints that are found alive at the coming of Christ, shall have no pre-eminence above those that are asleep ; that they shall not be changed and caught up before the dead awake, but the dead in Christ shall be first raised with their bodies changed, and then the change shall pass upon those who are alive, and they shall all be caught up with the newly risen saints (from whom they shall not differ in the least) to meet the Lord in the air. Thus shall their vile bodies be

be changed ; And O the greatness of the change that shall pass upon them ! from corruptible they shall be changed into incorruptible, from dishonourable into glorious, from weak into powerful and strong, from mortal to immortal, from natural to spiritual bodies. These are great changes indeed, but not too great for him to perform, who shall come from heaven for these and other glorious purposes. He shall not only *change our vile body, but fashion it like unto his glorious body.* This is good news indeed ! here we may rest satisfied, without wishing to know the particulars ; it is enough for us to be able to say with St. John, “ Behold what manner “ of love the Father hath bestowed upon us “ that we should be called the sons of GOD : “ therefore the world knoweth us not, be-“ cause it knew him not. Beloved, now “ are we the sons of God, and it doth not “ yet appear what we shall be : but we know “ that when he shall appear we shall be like “ him ; for we shall see him as he is. And “ every man that hath this hope in him “ purifieth himself even as he is pure.” 1 John, iii. 1, 2, 3. This is sufficient to give us full satisfaction in this important point, we shall be like our Lord, our bodies in that day shall

be

be like his ; but we must not wait so long to have our minds and souls like his ; for if we would wish to appear like his glorious and beautiful body in the day of his appearing, we must be conformed to him in temper, spirit and conduct now. "Herein is our " love made perfect, that we may have boldness before him in the day of Judgment, " because as he is so are we in this world."

1 John, iv. 17. In this world our bodies cannot be like his, we must wait the change that will take place at the resurrection morn, ere we can be like him in this respect : but we must aim now to be like him in his benevolence, meekness, humility, resignation, patience, piety, obedience, &c.

And if we are thus like him now, we shall be dead to sin, dead to the world, &c. and our life will be hid with Christ in God : Then, "when Christ who is our life shall appear, " we shall also appear with him in glory."

Col. iii. 3, 4. Our bodies like his shall be immortal ; we cannot die any more, but shall be equal to the angels, being the children of God, and the children of the Resurrection ; and as Christ was raised from the dead to die no more, so shall we be. Our bodies like his

his shall be incorruptible, no more subject to pain, sickness, old age, decay, or death. Eternal youth, health, and beauty shall smile upon our countenances, and glow upon our cheeks. The bodies of the saints shall be glorious like the body of their Lord ; they shall appear with him in glory, and they shall be like him in that respect, as well as others : they shall “ shine forth as the sun in the “ kingdom of their Father : as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for “ ever and ever.” See St. Matt. xiii. 43. Dan. xii. 3. The form and fashion of the glorified bodies of the saints will be according to the glorious body of Christ ; and like him they will be incapable of pain, sorrow, death or corruption ; like him immortal, spiritual, and beautiful. O glorious thought ! were even this all : But Christ is determined to make his saints like himself, by making them partners with him in his kingdom, sharers with him in his throne, “ He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, “ to him will I give power over the nations : “ and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, “ as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken “ to shivers, even as I received of my Father, “ and I will give him the morning star. To

" him that overcometh will I grant to sit
 " with me in my throne, even as I also over-
 " came and am set down with my Father
 " in his throne." Rev. ii. 26, 27, 28. iii. 25.
 No wonder that St. Paul could say, " For I
 " reckon that the sufferings of this present
 " time are not worthy to be compared with
 the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 Rom. viii. 18. O what a glorious day shall
 that be, when all that have been like to Christ
 in this world, in spirit, shall be like him in
 person ! All the raised bodies of the saints
 shall appear in the highest perfection of beau-
 ty and comeliness, without the least natural
 or moral defect. O glorious state ! how ought
 we to give diligence to make our calling and
 election sure to that invaluable prize ! Can
 we be cold and unmoved when such animat-
 ing things are set before us ?

It is asked by some whether the raised bodies
 will eat and drink ? Most have believed
 the contrary ; grounding their belief on those
 words, " They shall hunger no more, neither
 " thirst any more :" Rev. vii. 16. But if such
 persons would take the pains to read the rea-
 sons given in the very next verse, why they
 shall not hunger and thirst any more, they
 must

must see that the text is far from proving that they do not eat and drink : “ For the Lamb “ who is in the midst of the throne shall *feed* “ *them*, and shall lead them unto living “ fountains of waters.” ver. 16. I suppose Christ could have as easily given his disciples a true as a false idea ; and yet if *they shall eat no more, neither drink any more*, why did he say, “ And I appoint unto you a king- “ dom, as my Father hath appointed unto “ me ; that ye may eat and drink at my “ table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones “ judging the twelve tribes of Israel ? ” Luke xxii. 29, 30.

If you say Christ spoke in that manner to convey the idea of the full enjoyment of intellectual pleasure, and that they could not comprehend him unless he spake by metaphors ; I would ask if it would not have been full as easy for him to say, *You shall not need to eat or drink any more when you come into my kingdom*, as to say, *That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom*? Many preachers, whose abilities for instruction did not exceed Christ’s, and whose hearers were not abundantly quicker in apprehension than the Apostles were at that time, have taught them

them such spiritual ideas about heaven and another world, as far exceed any thing I can find of the sort in the scriptures. And their congregations understand them perfectly well, and all agree that they shall be supported without food or drink in heaven. Therefore I am of the opinion that if our Lord has not given forth such spiritual ideas of his kingdom, the reason was not because he could not make himself understood as well as the moderns, but because he did not judge their description of those things true.

To speak what I think upon this subject, I believe there has been too much refinement, and things have been spiritualized away so much, in order to avoid too gross ideas, that in reality few people have any ideas at all when speaking or hearing of these great things*.

The Changes that shall pass upon these vile bodies of ours in order to deliver them from mortality, corruption, weakness, dis-

* For more passages that speak of eating, drinking, and being clothed, and of the riches, honours and pleasures of eternal life, see my Sermon on future happiness, printed in the Philadelphian Magazine, No. viii. & ix.

honour, &c. and to clothe them with honour, glory, immortality and incorruption, and to fashion them according to the likeness of his glorious body, are so great that they would almost exceed belief, were we not assured that they shall be effected by that powerful “working, whereby he is able even to “subdue all things unto himself.”

It is the method which God always takes to strengthen our faith in his promises, if we seem to be surprized at the greatness of one, he immediately gives us another still greater. Instances of this kind are numerous in the Scriptures, but the following may serve as a specimen to confirm the truth of this observation.

When the armies of the Kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom, went out against Moab, and were likely to perish for want of water, the king came to Elisha, who regarding the presence of Jehoshaphat the good king of Judah, (O how beneficial is goodness !) said,
 “ Thus saith JEHOVAH, Make this valley full
 “ of ditches. For thus saith JEHOVAH, Ye
 “ shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain;
 “ yet that valley shall be filled with water, that
 “ ye

“ ye may drink, both ye and your cattle
 “ and your beasts. And this is but a light
 “ thing in the sight of JEHOVAH : He will
 “ deliver the Moabites also into your hand,
 “ &c.” 1 Kings iii. 16, 17, 18. Here God
 gave them what they requested, and much
 more, declaring that even such a wonderful
 miracle was with him but a light thing.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, the prophet personating Christ, laments that he had laboured in vain, and spent his strength for nought and in vain, forasmuch as he had not even seen Israel gathered : But the promise of God bursts forth to him far beyond the gathering of Israel, saying, “ It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob ; and to restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” And not only to save the people of the inhabited parts of the globe, but also to establish the earth, and to cause the desolate heritages to be inherited ; that is, to fill all parts of the world with inhabitants ; which shall be the case when Christ shall reign upon earth. But the promise stops not here, but goes farther

ther still, reaching to the prisoners, to them that sit in Darkness; declaring that they shall be released, and shall shew themselves, shall come out of great tribulation, shall be delivered from the tormenting pain of hunger and thirst, which is the most dreadful of all pains; shall find mercy, and be led into green pastures; by the living springs shall the Lord guide them.* Whoever sees how beautifully these promises rise one above another, must be charmed with the grand idea: First the raising up, the restoration and salvation of the tribes of Jacob is promised. But is this all? no; so far from it, that it is called, *a light thing*. Then the salvation of the Gentiles is spoken of; after that, the promise that kings shall see and arise, and princes shall worship, him whom formerly man despised, and the nation abhorred, but who was even then the Holy One of Israel. But the promise ends not here; he shall do more: he shall not only save the people that are alive, but shall cause the waste and desolate places to be filled with inhabitants. But is this all? why truly as we have already included both the tribes of

Jacob

* See Isaiah xlix. 5,—10. xlvi. 6, 7; compared with Psalm, cvii. 10,—16. Rev. vii. 14,—17.

Jacob, and the Gentiles, with their kings and princes, and all the inhabitants of the earth, I know not how to extend the promise any farther, without visiting the regions of the dead, and those that are cut off from the land of the living, for all others were mentioned in the descriptions given before. But as Christ is Lord over the dead and the living, and has the keys of hell and death, I cannot doubt but he will, according to this promise, bring the prisoners of death out of the prison, and have mercy upon them that are in darkness and pain. This idea raises the promise to the highest possible pitch ; and this is with me a strong proof of its truth ; for God hath made the greatest imaginable promises to Christ ; but if he hath not promised him that he shall be the restorer and deliverer of the most wretched and miserable, then the consequence will be, that this promise is a mere unmeaning tautology ; and that more glorious promises might have been made to Christ than really are.

If these promises appear marvellous to us, and we think they cannot be fulfilled, they may not appear so in the eyes of God ; as he said respecting his promises of prosperity to Judah

Judah and Jerusalem, "Thus saith JEHOVAH
 " of hosts : If it be marvellous in the eyes
 " of the remnant of this people in these
 " days, should it also be marvellous in mine
 " eyes ? saith JEHOVAH of hosts." The pro-
 mises of the prosperity of Judah and Jerusa-
 lem after the return from the Babylonish
 captivity were marvellous in the sight of those
 few poor captives that first returned, but God
 immediately adds other promises far more
 grand and glorious, which though not yet
 fulfilled, shall be in due time, "Thus saith
 " JEHOVAH of hosts ; behold I will save my
 " people from the east country, and from the
 " west country ; And I will bring them, and
 " they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem :
 " and they shall be my people, and I will be
 " their God, in truth and in righteousness."

Zech. viii. 6, 7, 8. This latter wonder shall
 so far exceed the former, as to cause it in
 comparison to be forgotten.

I might instance many promises of the like
 nature, but a few out of the New Testament
 must suffice for the present.

When Jesus promised the young man trea-
 sure in heaven, upon condition that he would

sell what he had, and give to the poor, and come and follow him, Peter, no doubt surprized at the generous offer of our Lord to give the youth heavenly treasures in exchange for earthly (as we should be if we believed it, but the misfortune is, many don't believe that he intended any such thing) said to Jesus,

“ Behold we have left all and followed thee,

“ what shall we have therefore ? shall we

“ have treasure in heaven, as thou didst pro-

“ mise the young man that he should receive

“ in case he parted with all for thy sake ?

“ behold we have done that already which

“ thou requiredst him to do !”

Upon which Jesus made him and the disciples a promise a million fold greater, not only that they should have treasure in heaven, but that when he should sit upon the throne of his glory, they (if they continued to follow him in the regeneration, and remained with him in his temptation, or suffered with him, as Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. xi. 12. which continuance is always expressed or implied in promises of this kind) should also sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And then to encourage men to follow him, and to forsake all

all for his name's-sake, and the gospel's, he makes such a promise, so large, rich and sure, that were it only believed, with all the heart, Christ would not want for followers ; and no one would hesitate in the least to part with his wealth, friends, good name, or even his life for Christ's sake ; for he promises a hundred fold, which is ten thousand per cent, to all that shall leave any thing for his sake, even in the present time, *and* (mind his words) *in the world to come eternal life.*

An hundred fold ! ten thousand per cent. in the present time ! of the same kind of things that we leave, part with, or bestow for his sake : Hear the promise, it is worthy of being written in letters of gold :—Oh that it could be believed !—

“ Verily I say unto you, There is no man
 “ that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters,
 “ or father, or mother, or wife, or children,
 “ or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but
 “ he shall receive an hundred fold now in
 “ this time, houses, and brethren, and sist-
 “ ers, and mothers, and children” (but not
 wives, as that would have destroyed the lite-
 ral sense and beauty of the text) “ and lands,
 “ with persecutions ; and in the world to

" come eternal life." S. Matt. xix. [Mark ix.]

When our Lord cursed the fig-tree, and it dried up from the roots in one day, the disciples were astonished to see it ; but Jesus told them to have faith in God, assuring them that if they had faith, and did not doubt, then they should not only be able to do that which he had done to the fig-tree, but that which was far enough greater ; and even though they should command a mountain to be removed, and to be cast into the sea, it should obey them, and whatever they asked in prayer thus believing, without doubting, they should certainly receive without fail. St. Matt. xxi. 20, 21, 22. St. Mark, xi. 22, 23, 24. And our Saviour, to encourage his disciples, to strengthen their faith, and to teach them to have confidence in him says, " Verily, " verily I say unto you, He that believeth on " me, the works that I do shall he do also : " and greater works than these shall he do ; " because I go unto the Father. And what- " soever ye shall ask in my name that will I " do, that the Father may be glorified in the " Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my " name I will do it." St. John xiv. 12, 13, 14. There is nothing that we want so much

much as faith, simply to believe, and courage and resolution to obey our Lord and Saviour.

When Nathanael came to Jesus, our Lord called him by his name, or which was more, described him as an honest hearted man, without deceit or guile ; and therefore worthy of the character of an Israelite indeed ; Nathanael was surprized, and said unto him, " Whence knowest thou me ? " Jesus answered, " and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Nathanael convinced and astonished, cried out, " Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." " Jesus answered, and said unto him, Because I said unto thee I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou ? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he faith unto him, " Verily, verily I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon (or continually coming and returning to and from) the Son of man." St. John i. 47—

51. This wonderful sight which will be visible to the saints in the Millenium, will be far beyond all the wonders that have ever yet been seen on the earth.

When

When the disciples of Christ murmured at his discourse of giving them his flesh to eat, or giving them himself to be within them a principle of life, " he said unto them, Doth this offend you ? What and if you should see the Son of man ascend up where he was before ?" St. John vi. 61, 62. Thereby intimating that his descent from heaven, to be born as of woman, and his ascension thither again, were, though strictly true) far greater wonders than any he had mentioned in that discourse.

And when Nicodemus was surprized at the discourse of our Lord concerning the nature and necessity of being born from above, and said, " How can these things be ? Jesus answered and said unto him, " Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things ? Verily, verily I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen ; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things ? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." John iii. 9—13. Which

Which was a far more wonderful thing than for an inward change of heart and temper to take place in man.

And to give but one instance more. When Christ speaking of the power he had to give life to the souls of men, said, "Verily verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." And lest that should be thought to be out of his power, he afterwards adds, "Marvel not at this; for the hour (or time) is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, &c." thereby intimating that if he could raise the dead out of their graves, he certainly had power to deliver those who believed in him from condemnation, and to quicken them with spiritual, and give them eternal life. See St. John, v. 25, 28, 29.

And thus it is in the present case, however difficult it may appear to us that these vile bodies shall be changed, and fashioned like to his glorious body, yet if we can believe that he has power sufficient to subdue all things to himself, which is so much more difficult,

difficult, we can certainly admit without hesitation that he can make his saints like himself.

For if he can bring the greatest rebels to bow and swear allegiance to him, and can rehead, and reconcile all things, whether in heaven or earth, it is not to be disputed but he can change those into his image that earnestly desire it.

It is thought by many that the doctrine of Christ's subduing, reheading, reconciling, and consequently restoring all things, is an hypothesis invented by speculation, and founded upon vain and carnal reasonings ; but for my own part, I freely declare that it was firm and unshaken faith in the holy scriptures, and in the power of God that brought me at first, and continues me still in the belief of this so difficult and sublime a truth, against which all present appearances combine, and sense and carnal reasonings are ready even in opposition to a multitude of plain scriptures to pronounce impossible.

It requires a vastly stronger faith to believe this important truth firmly upon the divine authority, than any one in the Bible ; and therefore

therefore I do not wonder that many good people, who have faith enough to trust their souls in the hands of Jesus, and to believe that he will fulfil all his promises in their behalf, both as to soul and body, for this life and that which is to come, have not enough to enable them to believe the final Restoration of all things.

The Faith that was necessary for Abraham, in order to believe that he should have a son in his old age, and should be the father of a multitude of nations, was not to be compared to the faith necessary to believe that our Lord is able, and that he will finally subdue, re-head in himself, reconcile and restore all things.

If God was to inform me by his word, that he would create a thousand worlds more than he has, turn all the animals into rational creatures, change stones into living intelligences, and perform ten thousand more such wonders in creation; it would not be half so difficult for me to believe as the doctrine of the restoration: for I never could believe *that*, till I could believe that God could do every thing that he pleased, and that nothing was too hard for him.

In the creation of a thousand new worlds, &c. there is nothing to oppose the divine operation ; God need but to speak the word, and it would be immediately accomplished ; but in the restoration of fallen moral intelligent agents, that have a power of resisting the Holy Ghost, of fighting against God, and who have been long hardened in rebellion against their Creator, and whose malice and enmity against him is inconceivable, there are innumerable difficulties to be overcome, before they will voluntarily bow, willingly and freely choose to return to God, humbly and thankfully accept even the punishment of their iniquity, and with all their hearts bow the knee, and swear allegiance to the Lord ; that I do not wonder that it has gained so little credit, even amongst the most serious people. For when I look into the world and view the prevalency of vice, that madness which has infected mankind, and survey the means that are used, and yet seem to be used in vain to destroy it, how it prevails against even the influence of the Almighty himself ; I should think it impossible for it ever to be destroyed, if he had not promised, and did I not believe him able to perform.

When

When I take a survey of the enmity and malice, the inveterate hatred in the hearts of rebels, and which seem inseparable from rebellion, I should be ready to say with Milton,

" For never can true reconciliation grow

" Where wounds of deadly hate have pierc'd so deep ;"

if I did not firmly believe, upon the authority of a greater than Milton, that Jesus Christ having made peace by the blood of his cross, will most certainly RECONCILE ALL THINGS to himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. Col. i. 20.

And further, when I seriously think upon the dreadful stain and guilt of sin, how it has defiled our whole soul, and seems as it were to enter into the very composition of our frame; and moreover when I feel how difficult it is for those to be saved and delivered from sin who seek that deliverance all their life-time, and seek it in God's way too; I am ready to cry out, How can those ever be delivered from sin, that always while in time continue to delight in it?

Nothing can help me over these difficulties, and many more of the like kind, but solid unshaken

unshaken faith in the promises and power of God, who hath said, "Behold I make all things new."

But those who can firmly believe with St. Paul, that *the earnest expectation of the creature (or the whole creation) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*; and that *the creature itself (or the whole creation) shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*; Which cannot intend less than a freedom from sin, with all its consequences; will find no difficulty to believe that *we ourselves also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and that now groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption even the redemption of our body,* shall certainly obtain it. For if the whole creation shall be restored to its original purity and perfection, and made free from sin and its consequences, how much more shall the bodies of the saints be changed, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself!

A

LETTER TO A FRIEND,

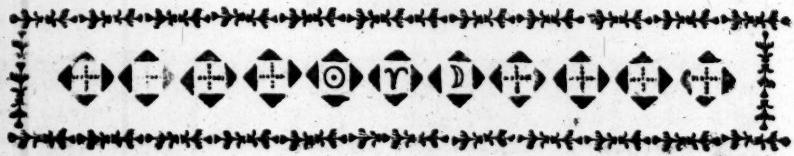
CONTAINING

SOME REMARKS

Upon the Rev. Mr. DAN TAYLOR's Sermon

"*The Eternity of future Punishment*

asserted and improved."



A

L E T T E R, &c.

My very dear Friend,

OUR kind letters are now before me, in
Y both of which you earnestly solicit me to
answer Mr. Taylor: but perhaps the best
answer that could be given would be to
print your first letter to me; wherein you give such a
charming account of the great good that you and many
others have received from the belief and cordial recep-
tion of that most glorious chain of Truths, which stands
connected with the doctrine of the final restoration of all
lapsed intelligences.

You have been more than ever convinced of the im-
portance of the present now; are more clearly made to
see the harmony of the sacred scriptures, the unity of
God's grand designs, and the justice and goodness of all
his ways. You testify that you are settled with much
more composure and tranquility in your mind than ever
you were before: and that you can now bow your knee
not only with humility but satisfaction; beholding
order, harmony, and benignity in every one of the
divine dispensations. All which glorious views cause
you to love God with all your heart. Surely these ef-
fects upon your own mind, and upon the minds of many
others,

others, shew that the doctrine of the *Universal Restoration* has nothing in it leading to licentiousness. I have always hitherto observed that erroneous sentiments dwelling in the mind produce baleful effects; and commonly they are the following, *Levity, Pride, Obsturacy, Bitterness, or Rancour against those who oppose their Tenets.* If you find these, or any of them, in the following Letter, I will give you leave to reject with abhorrence a system capable of producing such horrid effects.

One of the Sentences in your letter gave me pleasure in particular, which is this:—“ But if I speak ill of any, I shall prove that I have not profited by your example.” I sincerely pray God that all bitterness, envy and evil-speaking, with all malice, may for ever cease among those who contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

You intreat me to answer Mr. TAYLOR in every part, and justly observe that “ ALL Mankind are interested in the Debate.” This is true; for no controversy of equal importance with this was ever presented to mankind.

I shall therefore spend, at your desire, a few minutes in making some remarks upon Mr. Taylor’s Sermon.

I join with Mr. Taylor in sincerely declaring, that “ I always enter on disputation with reluctance;” and to this, and not to any consciousness of the weakness of the glorious cause in which I stand engaged, is my delay in answering him to be imputed. I have no secret designs to answer; TRUTH in LOVE is my only aim, and if my friend will convince me of my error, I will make my retraction as public as my defence.

The threatenings of everlasting fire, everlasting destruction, eternal damnation, eternal fire, and everlasting punishment,

ment, which Mr. Taylor has collected from the New Testament, and set in their order, (as I have also done in my dialogues) would have settled the point with me, as much as with him, notwithstanding all the instances of the words being used in a limited sense in the Bible, did I not find express Promises in the same Book, by the same Authority, of the gathering together, or re-heading in ONE, even in CHRIST, all things, whether in heaven or in earth; even in him who having made peace through the blood of his cross, the pleasure of the Father, is, by him to reconcile all things unto himself:—BY HIM (says St. Paul) whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And that God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a NAME which is above every name; that in the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father; which we are assured (1 Cor. xii. 3.) that no man can say but by the Holy Ghost. And it is the will of God, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth: and that every creature who is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them shall say, Blessing and honour and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And that there shall come a time when God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of men, And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things (among which sin, and all its consequences may be reckoned) shall pass away. Then he that sitteth upon the throne shall say, Behold I make all things new. And surely, I think, ALL MEN must be included

included in that description. See Ephes. i. 10. Col. i. 20. Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. 1 Tim. ii. 4. compared with Ephes. i. 11. See also Rev. v. 13. xxi. 3, 4, 5.

Now were it not for these and many other express promises in the New Testament, I should fall in with Mr. Taylor, or rather I should never have renounced that Tenet of *endless damnation*, which I, as well as he, was brought up to believe, and of which I never entertained a doubt till I had been a diligent reader and preacher of the New Testament more than seven years; and to this day never should have doubted of it, had I not found that many of the divine promises (in my apprehension at least) stood directly opposite to the idea of *endless misery*. This is the great turning point between Mr. Taylor and me: We both have our eyes upon the Scriptures of the New Testament. He has collected the threatenings therein contained, and placed them in the strongest light; and, as he concludes that he cannot misunderstand the Speaker, and believing that he hath positively threatened *endless damnation* to those who are finally impenitent; therefore no arguments, as he thinks, can be brought from Scripture to overthrow that idea.

On the other hand, I think that the promises of the *reconciliation* and *restitution* of all things, contained in the passages above cited, and in many other texts; are some of the most plain, positive, and absolute promises, or prophecies, in all the Bible; and in which I think the great Speaker used those plain words, that most clearly and naturally shew his intention to be to restore and reconcile all things. And therefore I conclude that he cannot have threatened *endless damnation*, as it appears to be inconsistent with his promises.

In my Letter to the Rev. Mr. DE COETLOGON, I have given six plain Reasons why I cannot believe *endless misery*; and as they have never yet been confuted, I must still think them solid, and unanswered, if not unanswerable.

If *endless misery* is threatened, some of the promises in the New Testament can never be fulfilled in their most plain and obvious sense. As for a specimen, let us set one of the threatenings and one of the promises together: —

These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, for ever and ever.

St. Matt. xxv. 46.

Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard me, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold I make all things new.

Rev. v. 13.—xxi. 5.

Now render the words *everlasting*, and *for ever*, **ENDLESS**, and **WHILE GOD EXISTS**, and then there is the greatest possible contradiction between the threatenings and the promises. Both cannot be fulfilled. For if some are to remain in sin and misery to all eternity, and are designed to curse and blaspheme the name of God, as long as he exists, then it must be self-evident that there never will be a period when every creature in the

Universe

Universe will ascribe, “ Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to God and to the Lamb for ever and ever.” As for the Rev. Mr. WESLEY’s supposition, that those in Heaven will say, *Blessing*—and those on Earth, *Honour*—and those under the Earth, or in Hell, *Glory*—and those in the Sea, *Power*—it appears to stand in contradiction to St. John, who heard every creature sing all those notes; which all equally imply the highest praise to God.

But if instead of rendering the word EVERLASTING, *endless*, we render it, *perpetual*, during a hidden period, then it will appear possible for both the threatening and the promise to be compleatly fulfilled. Not both at once, but each in their due season; first the threatening, and then the promise.

I cannot therefore at present give up a system that reconciles the seeming contradictions in the New Testament, for one that renders them impossible to be reconciled.

If therefore the number of those who have believed the Restoration in the third, seventeenth, and present Century, has been but small, I cannot see how that affects the controversy, unless Mr. Taylor can prove that the *many* are always in the right; and then he must renounce Protestant Principles, if not Christianity itself.

As for the doctrine of the Restoration being *erroneous* and *poisonous*; it must be proved to be FALSE, and contrary to the Promises of God, before it can deserve those harsh epithets.

Those who defend the doctrine of the Restoration from Scripture, if I may be allowed to speak for myself

self and brethren, are so far from doing it by laboured criticisms and deductions, that they suppose they have many plain Scriptures, which expressly relate to the subject, to build upon. A specimen of which I have produced; sufficient at least to make the most positive defenders of *endless misery* hesitate, and not pronounce with quite so much certainty as some of them do.

Mr. Taylor ventures to appeal to all mankind,
 " Whether there be one single passage in all that blessed
 " book which treats of the subject, in which the limit-
 " ed duration of misery is clearly expressed, or even
 " clearly implied ?" (Page 7.)

If I am in this appealed to, among my brethren of mankind, I answer: That, in St. Luke, xii. 47, 48. our Saviour is treating of future punishment, when he says, " And that servant who knew his Lord's will, " and prepared not himself, nor did according to his " will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that " knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, " shall be beaten with few stripes ; for unto whomso- " ever much is given, of him much shall be required ; " and to whom men have committed much, of him they " will ask the more."

This sentence is just, conformable to all the ideas we have of God, and consistent with the nature of things; and I am really blind, if the limited duration of future misery is not more than clearly implied in **FEW STRIPES**. For how can those stripes be called *few*, that shall finally exceed the drops of water in the Ocean, in number, and shall never cease while God exists?

Our Saviour calls Hell, *a furnace of fire*, into which the wicked shall be cast, (St. Matt. xiii. 42. 50.) And

is not a furnace designed for the express purpose of melting, purifying, moulding, and rendering useful the metals which are cast therein? And does not this similitude naturally convey the idea of a salutary, and consequently of a *limited* punishment? For the moment we consider punishment as useful, we must think it limited; as endless punishment can never be of the least use to the sufferers in any respect; neither is it possible that God could design it for their good: And yet to think that God hath ordained positive punishments, without having the reformation of the criminals in view, is truly shocking to my mind, at present!

Those passages that speak of God's rendering to every man according to his deeds, without respect of persons, seem to me to imply *limited* punishments; as also those that speak of our *reaping what we sow*. For to me it appears incongruous to suppose, that he that sows only a few grains of seed, shall be as long in reaping his harvest as he that sows many bushels.

In that very passage where St. James says, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy," he immediately adds, "and Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment." Which words, if they do not plainly intimate punishment to be limited, I must confess, I know not what they mean.

But if I spend so much time in the answering of every paragraph in Mr. Taylor's sermon, I shall write a large book instead of a letter.

Mr. Taylor, in page 10. asks two very weighty and important questions:

To the first I answer, that as the greek word rendered *eternal*, or *everlasting*, conveys the idea of *perpetual, unceasing*, and has a near affinity with the Hebrew

word

word which in the Old Testament is rendered *everlasting*, and which comes from a root which signifies *to hide or conceal*; it was therefore very proper to express the nature of that punishment which is to have no intermission, and whose duration is hidden, and known only to God.

To the question, Whether “if our all-wise Teacher had designed to convey the idea of a proper *eternity*, he could have found a more proper epithet for the purpose than that which he has used in those places where he has threatened the wicked with *everlasting punishment*? I answer, That, if he had only said, *They shall be tormented as long as God lives*; it would not only have been a much more proper expression to set forth *endless duration* by, but would have put the matter out of all dispute for ever. But then no contrary promises, or even intimations would have been found in the Scriptures. Had our Lord used the same expressions respecting the misery of the wicked, as he hath respecting the happiness of the righteous—had he said, *Because I live, shall the wicked also die, neither can they live any more; they shall be always in the lake of fire; eternal life shall have no power over them.* Had ever these and many other similar expressions been used, who could ever have imagined, in that case, that the punishment of the wicked would end? I cannot now find, even in our Translation, that *endless punishment* is once used, or *world without end*. But we have many ways of expressing *endless duration*, besides by the word *everlasting*, which is frequently used in English, and understood to mean much less than *endless duration*, though Mr. Taylor says, “That the English word *everlasting* signifies never-“*enaing*, is too well known by the weakest person in “this

" this assembly, to stand in the least need of proof."
 (page 7.)

Upon which you observe, that " Mr. Taylor must be supposed to have preached this sermon to a very wise congregation ; for he says, the weakest of them precisely know the meaning of the word EVERLASTING. If so, such knew the import of the word better than their minister, perhaps."

Mr. Taylor takes up the idea again in his 21st page, and supposes that it will be granted, " that we do not know of any language by which the sacred writers could have conveyed the idea of a proper eternity in a more full and expressive manner, supposing they had intended to convey that idea." This I cannot grant, because I have before proved the contrary ; for had they said, *while God shall live*, it would have been much stronger.

As for the observation, " that this eternal duration of misery only begins after the Day of Judgment, when all the Revolutions of Time are ended ;" And that " after which we know of no Revolutions that shall ever take place :" (Page 21. 22.) I grant, if Mr. Taylor could prove that from Scripture, he would gain his cause. But I think I have proved the contrary from Scripture, in my Letter to Mr. De Coetlogon. I have there endeavoured to shew, that the most grand and wonderful of all revolutions, such as the Conflagration of the World—the Creation of the new Heavens and Earth—the Descent of the holy City, New Jerusalem, from God, out of Heaven ;—an end being put to death, sorrow, crying, and pain, and all things being made new :—All these shall take place *after* the Day of Judgment. This Letter Mr. Taylor saw before he sent

his

his Sermon to the press, and I think he should have proved the Creation of the New Heavens and Earth not to have been *after* the Judgment, or else he should have suppressed that paragraph. All who have read my books, know that I place the final Restoration far beyond the Day of Judgment. This has not yet been confuted; and the Creation of the New Heavens, Earth, &c. must be overthrown before it can be confuted.

I once told Mr. Taylor, that if he would shew, from Scripture, the absolute impossibility of any change taking place upon man after the death of the body, or prove that Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and close the Mediatorial Dispensation at the Day of Judgment, I would confess myself to be wrong in my ideas. Mr. Taylor and many other Divines make Judgment an *END*, and therefore naturally suppose it *final*, and that it closes the Dispensations of God. On the other hand, I believe it to be a *Mean*, and as designed to give way to that Mercy, which shall rejoice against it. The grand End is, that GOD may be ALL IN ALL: And when that is the case, Sin and Misery will exist no more. Then shall the whole *rational* Creation be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God! Then the morning Stars shall, doubtless, again sing together, and all the sons of God shall shout for joy!

I am very much surprized that good men should make so exceeding light of *limited* punishment; even though it should last fifty thousand years, or fifty thousand times that number, which is no less than two thousand and five hundred millions of years; which is more than four hundred thousand times as long as it has been since the Creation. That this should be called *a mere point*, and

and that the difference between entering into happiness at death, and after 2500000000 years of torment, should be called a *mere nothing* by a minister of Christ, when the blessed Jesus thought (and justly, I presume) that his sufferings were more than a *mere nothing*, though he knew them to be limited to less than one day, is truly surprizing! Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: Father, save me from this hour; &c. seems too pathetic language to deprecate the sufferings of a day, upon the supposition that 2500000000 years of the bitterest pains is a mere nothing! How could that good man, Mr. Taylor, suppose that all the difference between the most abandoned sinner, the vilest apostate, and the most eminent saint, upon my scheme, is that the former shall not be admitted into Heaven *quite so soon*? This, you observe, is a poor little evasion. It would be a thousand times as true to say that there was no difference between a king and a beggar in this world, or between being crowned king of England, and being hanged, drawn, and quartered, for high treason against the state.

As for the argument from the *infinity* of sin, to the eternity of punishment, I am far from *scneering* at it, though I did not think it worth while to notice it in my Dialogues upon the Restoration: And though Mr. Edwards's Sermon upon this fanie text that Mr. Taylor has taken, contains a number of pages of that kind of reasoning, yet I did not look upon myself as obliged to answer it; for it is but *mere reasoning* after all; and I choose to found the doctrine of the *Restoration* upon plain Scripture. If God has thought proper to declare, that he will make all things new, and will put an end to death,

sorrow, crying, and pain, it is my business to believe him, and not reason away his promises. But if man can properly be said to commit infinite sin, because the glorious Object against whom he sins is infinite—why not perform infinite righteousness by the same rule, when he yields sincere and hearty obedience to God? The matter is just as plain on one side as on the other. But let sin be ever so infinite, the Mercy of God is more so. If sin reaches to Heaven, God's Mercy is above the Heavens, and endureth for ever; and *Where sin hath abounded, Grace shall much more abound*; is a sufficient answer to this common and trite argument. Besides, Mr. Taylor holds, with us, that Christ was God and Man united in one person; and that he made atonement, full, perfect, and complete for All. How is it then that his obedience and sacrifice should not be as infinite as sin? Surely his actions and sufferings were highly acceptable to the Father; and were much more infinite in their merit than our sins were in demerit! And who shall dare condemn to endless punishment, the souls for whom the Saviour gave himself a ransom? Shall the purchase of his blood never be restored? Shall he begin the great work of their Redemption, and never be able to compleat it? Heaven forbid the thought! These consequences appear as dreadful to me, as the consequences of believing the Universal Restoration do to Mr. Taylor.

If Christ has so positively declared, that punishment shall never end, as Mr. Taylor says, (page 34.) how shall we reconcile the repeated declarations of our Lord, where he affirms, that all things are delivered to him of the Father, and that all that the Father giveth to him shall come to him, in such a manner as not to be cast

out;

out ; and that it is the Father's will that he should lose nothing ; and that power is given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to ALL that the Father hath given him ? See St. Matt. xi. 27. St. Luke, x. 22. St. John, iii. 35. xiii. 3. xvii. 2, 3. vi. 37. 39. 44, 45.

From these passages we are taught these plain truths in the clearest manner : (at least they seem clear to me.)

1. That all men are given to Christ.
2. That all, so given, shall come to him.
3. That he will give eternal life, the knowledge of God and himself, to all.
4. That all shall come to him in such a manner as not to be cast out ; and which must therefore allude to a time beyond the Day of Judgment ; for many shall be then cast out, and sentenced to depart from him.
5. That as none can come except they are drawn of the Father, and have Christ revealed to them ; yet it being the positive will of God that all shall come ; therefore all shall be taught of God, as it is written in the Prophets.
6. That it is the will of God, that nothing that he hath given to Christ be *finally* lost, but *restored*, or raised up to life eternal at last.

Now, if these positions are written upon the very face and letter of these passages, Is not *endless damnation* impossible ? What can all these promises mean ? I beg to be enlightened if I err ; but ‘ Let every one consider, that this is not a notion or speculation. It is ‘ not a hint dropped by the bye—It is not a thought ‘ collected from a single passage, or a few passages of ‘ Scripture merely by implication. But it is a glorious ‘ and infinitely important Truth : a plain Scripture
‘ Doctrine

• Doctrine, positively and repeatedly asserted in various
 • forms of speech, on the most solemn occasions, when
 • every circumstance required the most clear and ex-
 • pressive language. Let no Christian therefore dare
 • to reject it,—lest he should be found guilty of making
 God a liar, in not believing the record he hath given
 of his Son. Let none therefore imagine, that Christ
 will always give up into the hands of his enemy great
 numbers of those whom he hath purchased with his
 own blood; and whom the Father gave him power over,
 that he should give eternal Life to them all, who were
 given to him with the design that he should lose
 nothing.

I see no occasion for Christ to labour and die in vain, and suffer Satan to triumph, and let his gracious promises fail, in order to fulfil his threatenings. I believe his threatenings were never designed to make void his promises; and therefore I cannot, at present, receive the doctrine of *endless misery*. Because, if that be true, Christ never can draw *all men* unto himself; which he declared he would, if he should be lifted up; St. John, xii. 32. He never can give eternal life to all that the Father hath given him; and he will lose finally, and to all eternity, a number of the souls which he made, purchased with his own blood, and whom the Father gave him, with a design, as he testifies, that none of them should be lost.

Finally. To me, it is plain and evident, that if
 “ the whole Creation shall be delivered from the bon-
 “ dage of corruption, into the glorious Liberty of the
 “ children of God,” as the Apostle asserts, Rom. viii.
 21. then shall no part be miserable without end.

For

For answers to the case of Judas, and for the same word being used both for the happiness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked, I refer you to my Dialogues upon the subject. And as for the doctrine of the Restoration leading to *licentiousness*, we know it to be false by happy experience: And you observe in your letter, " Endless punishment so long preached has not stimulated to universal virtue ; far from it. Nor will man ever be excited to recede from evil, so soon upon that plan, as upon making him an accountable creature, to be rewarded or punished according to his deeds."

I have shewn in my letter to Mr. De Coetlogon, that the Belief of the Universal Restoration is perfectly consistent with *loving* all men, *doing good* to all, *forgiving* all, and *praying* for all ; and therefore there can be nothing in it materially wrong. For, " He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. . He that loveth his brother hath fulfilled the law ; for Love is the fulfilling of the law." Let us therefore love one another, and extend our benevolence even to our enemies : so shall we be the children of our heavenly Father.

As for the Rev. Mr. Taylor, I heartily love and esteem him, look upon him as a sincere Christian, a faithful minister of Christ, and a man who speaks and writes what he believes. And I rather rejoice at his taking up the pen, because he appears to be influenced, not by a malicious party spirit, but by nobler motives. Such an one I can freely canvass the matter with, and shall be happy to yield to him in all things wherein he can offer me conviction. I trust we both agree in seeking TRUTH, and not Victory.

I have written this Letter in great haste, and have spent but little more than one *afternoon* upon it. If there should be any thing else in Mr. Taylor's Sermon which you think may require a more particular answer, please to notice it in your next, and I will give you farther satisfaction, if in my power.

It was but yesterday that I received your letter, having but a few days since returned from Kent; where a great and effectual door is opened for the Gospel; and where the very kind and friendly behaviour of the people gives the best evidence of their receiving the Truth in Love.

With the most sincere and hearty respects to yourself and family, and to all the Friends in your parts, I rest,
Yours in the best of bonds,

E. W.

LONDON, May 27th.

1789.



ERRATA.

- Page 12. l. 13. *dele seek.*
- 23. l. 20. *for king r. kings.*
- 28. l. 23. *for 2 Tim. xi. r. ii. in the margin*